

HR Weekly Podcast
6/6/2007

Today is June 6, 2007, and welcome to the HR Weekly Podcast from the State Office of Human Resources. This week's topic concerns the importance of onboarding as a recruitment and retention tool.

Talent management is the alignment of employees with business priorities to deliver greater performance and results. The process of talent management includes recruiting, deploying, developing, and retaining the necessary workforce to deliver an organization's primary mission.

Onboarding, which is critical to this talent management process, is the new employee orientation and mainstreaming process. We have all heard the adage: "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." Onboarding applies that adage to the workplace.

Think for a minute about the typical new hire orientation nightmare. The new hire comes in on the first day and may not even have a specific work station assigned or a telephone or a PC. The new hire is next ushered off to orientation to be bombarded with papers, rules, policies...including comments, like "this is how you get fired." The new hire signs and signs and signs more papers than would be required in buying a house. When new hires go home to their families to tell them about their first day on the job, we really don't want the most exciting thing for them to report to be: "I filled out over 25 employment forms today."

Of course, some paperwork must be handled on or before the start date. But, more successful organizations get the key documentation filed in advance or as quickly as they can on day one.

Recently, Hunter Douglas, a manufacturing company, found that by upgrading their onboarding process, they were able to reduce their turnover from a staggering 70% at six months to 16%. Hunter Douglas also saw improved attendance and increased productivity.

A strong onboarding program, executed effectively with the support of management, is well worth the initial investment. Actually, onboarding can begin as early as during recruitment by giving clear expectations of the job. Then, more formal onboarding begins on the first day on the job.

Effective onboarding should not try to cram too much information into a mind-numbing orientation. Instead, smart organizations break orientation into more interesting, "bite sized chunks." For example, an agency could incorporate OHR's on-line orientation program as an alternative approach to delivering some of the new hire information. Assigning new hires a mentor or coach can help provide new hires with the necessary support and resources to carry out the responsibilities of their new job.

Try not to make a new hire's first day all about paperwork. Also, prioritize interpersonal relationships with key colleagues. Remember that this day of first impressions can have an enormous impact in the new hire's interest in staying with your organization. OHR will include onboarding as a topic for further discussion at one of our upcoming HR Advisory meetings. If you have any questions, please contact your HR Consultant at 737-0900.

Thank you.